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past or the finished work—but of the living, the new task and the present duty. In this closing moment let us go back and down to the great foundation of Paul's whole appeal for repentance: it is all a message about God. That is the message, that is the faith which our time above all other times needs. Let us remember that for men who believe in

God "fear is as wrong as selfishness, and faith as essential as service." Only God can give steadiness and perspective to our convictions as we look at things from his point of view; only God can give strength to our purposes as we seek to do his will. And like the soldiers we shall find him with us as we go forward at whatever sacrifice in the doing of his will.

THE RELIGION OF THE GERMAN KAISER

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This striking article by Dr. Gilbert complements that of Louis Wallis in this number of the BIBLICAL WORLD. It should finally answer the question whether the religion of an autocrat, ruling by "divine right," is fitted for a world which has learned the meaning of the gospel and repatriated Jesus in the religion he founded.

This is a day of bewildering and painful contrasts. We have seen the Temple of Peace at The Hague rise amid the congratulations and good wishes of most of the great nations of the world, and then after a brief interval we have seen those same nations devoured by war. The voice of universal alliances for peace has been heard over the earth, supported by vast foundations dedicated to the same end, and anon that voice has been lost in the wild tumult of international strife. An era without parallel in history for its wide and splendid Christian missions has suddenly been merged in barbarism, and this dire transition has come about through the working of forces at the heart of Christendom itself. An age

rich in culture and warming more and more toward noble ideals of life has been plunged in heathenish night. And the strangest paradox of all is the fact that the man who is chiefly responsible for this infinite calamity to the world is the constitutional head of the Christian church of Prussia and regards himself as the chosen instrument of God in all the work of his life.

Very frequently and explicitly the Kaiser avows his Christian faith, and sometimes in an impressive and persuasive manner. He preaches. He makes religious addresses to military and naval recruits. He takes a prominent part at the dedication of churches. He is concerned for the religious education of the young. He assures his people that

not a morning or evening passes without a prayer by him on their behalf. At the outbreak of the war he concluded a short address to the residents of Berlin with a solemn command to go to their homes and pray. No other great ruler in Christian history has publicly declared his faith so often as has the Kaiser. And yet the question may be asked—yea, rather the question forces itself upon one in view of the Kaiser's great prominence in what appears to be the most colossal crime in history—whether his religion has any vital kinship with the gospel. What shall be the answer to this question?

The glory of the Kaiser in his own eyes is the fact that he is a Hohenzollern. The old classical motto, "I am a man, and nothing that belongs to man do I count foreign to myself," must be modified to fit the Kaiser, and must read, "I am a Hohenzollern, and whatever belongs to the Hohenzollerns is glorious in my sight." It is well known that the Kaiser has always been a passionate admirer of Frederick the Great. His worship of the Hohenzollerns is lavished especially on this founder of Prussia (1740-86) and on William I, his grandfather, to whom he wrongly ascribes the glory of having founded the German Empire. It must not be thought that he sees in Frederick simply great military genius, which indeed many see in him. No. This Prussian king, one of "the great bad men" of history, was, in the Kaiser's thought of him, the chosen of God, a favorite of heaven. The Kaiser says that God "never left him in the lurch." From the battlefields where he displayed his prowess, from Pirna and Leuthen

and Rossbach, God has been the "ally" of the German people. Thus the Kaiser sees in Frederick one on whom the favor of God rested in an uncommon measure, one through whom a new era of divine grace to the German people was introduced. Accordingly, when the Kaiser thinks of heaven, as on the occasion of his speech at Döberitz in May, 1903, he sees "assembled around the great Ally above" Frederick and William I with their numerous generals, field marshals, and paladins.

Let it be remembered that it was this Frederick who said, "It is not very wise in a king to have any religion himself," for "religion does not agree with those great political views which a monarch ought to have." It was he who said of war, "It is a trade in which the least scruple would spoil everything"; who said of justice, "We must do justice to all men and especially to our own subjects, *when it does not upset our own rights or wound our own authority*"; and who counseled his successor "not to commit that stupid folly of not abandoning an alliance whenever it is your interest so to do." It was this Frederick who wrote against the principles of Machiavelli, and then himself applied those infamous principles with consummate mastership. This is the character, this despot who feared not God nor regarded man, this wholesale robber, this worshiper of brute force, whom the Christian Kaiser, the *summus episcopus* of the Prussian church, urges his people to emulate!

It is highly significant that the Kaiser's most striking religious utterances, though made in times of peace, are frequently warlike in character and

seem to have a military end in view. Even the conception of God has not escaped a subtle transformation at his hands. Perhaps at no point has the Kaiser exercised a profounder religious influence than just here. He has given common currency to a warlike and national designation of God in the term "the great Ally" or "the old Ally." It appears that in the Kaiser's thought God is especially useful in war and is especially interested in German wars. This notion is not peculiar to the Kaiser, but he is the one who has forced it upon the minds of his countrymen.

When Bismarck by falsifying the Ems dispatch made war with France probable if not inevitable, von Roon, the Prussian Minister of war, who with Moltke was dining with Bismarck, exclaimed, "Our God of old still lives and will not let us perish in disgrace." That is to say, our old God is a God of war, and by giving us at length another war and its glory he will again prove to us that he is still alive. This is about the same thought of God that was held by the Germans in the time of Tacitus, five centuries before they had been touched by Christian influences. Well may the German historian Janson say that when this people were converted to Christianity their warlike character was not changed.

We have said that the Kaiser's designation of God contains a conception which is national as well as warlike. But these two aspects of the thought belong together. The warlike God is a *German* God. Ever since the days of the Elector and of Frederick, God has been "the great Ally" of the Germans.

This thought of divine favoritism looks strange indeed in the light of the twentieth century. We expect to find it among uncivilized peoples: it is part of the narrow intellectual outlook of barbarians; but here it appears in a modern European sovereign who is proud of his culture and constant in his claim to the Christian name. Here is the way he speaks: "The German people will be the rock of granite upon which our Lord God will build and complete the work of culture in the world." "The words of the poet will be fulfilled when he says, 'In contact with German life the world will grow well again.'" "Just as the great king [Frederick the Great] was never left in the lurch by the old Ally, so our Fatherland and this beautiful province [Silesia] will always be near his heart." "We shall conquer everywhere even though we be surrounded by enemies on every side, for there lives a powerful Ally, the old good God in heaven, who ever since the time of the great Elector and the great king has always been on our side." "I hope it will be granted to our German fatherland through the harmonious co-operation of princes and people, of its armies and its citizens, to become in the future as closely united, as powerful, and as authoritative as once the Roman world-empire was." There is yet a statement of the Kaiser that should not be overlooked in this connection. He was writing, in 1903, his views of the Old Testament and of God's modes of revelation. He mentions ten historical characters as conspicuous illustrations of the men through whom God makes himself known to the world. The ten are Hammurabi,

Abraham, Moses, Homer, Charlemagne, Luther, Shakespeare, Goethe, Kant, and "William the Great." The list contains one Babylonian, one Greek, one Englishman, two Hebrews, and *five* Germans, and one of these five to be ranked with Abraham and Moses is the Kaiser's grandfather, the man whom Bismarck's craft and violence made the first ruler of the German Empire!

The sole aim in quoting these passages is to call attention to them as an index of the value of the Kaiser's appreciation of Christianity. Their significance in this regard should not be overlooked. They are a unique phenomenon. No intelligent Christian, however great reason he may have had to glory in the achievements and the power of his people, has ever rivaled these words of the Kaiser. It is obviously impossible for a man to hold the Christian religion intelligently and fail to see that its first and fundamental conception is that of the universal fatherhood of God. To presume that the German nation, were it tenfold stronger and a hundred fold more humble and brotherly, is more dear to God than Serbia, or Belgium, or Poland, or Japan, or China, or India is to darken Christianity and mix its highest teaching with common paganism.

There must be no mistake at this point. It is crass heathenism to represent the God of Jesus as the fond "Ally" of Frederick the Great. If there was one man in Prussia in the eighteenth century who in spirit and aim was conspicuously alien to the principles of the gospel and whose influence on his own and subsequent generations was conspicuously bad, it was that ancestor

of the Kaiser whom he puts in the front rank in the heavenly world. If the man who judges thus is sound morally, he must be spiritually blind to the central conception of the Christian faith. The Kaiser's doctrine that the German nation, like the House of Hohenzollern, enjoys the position of a favorite in the sight of God is not only ridiculously presumptuous but also profoundly unchristian. It is inconceivable in anyone who claims to be a Christian unless his mind is preoccupied and controlled by some essentially unspiritual passion. It is such a mind that the Kaiser revealed when he charged the troops on their departure for China to do two things—to smite the Chinese so that they would not forget the blow in a thousand years, and to open a way for culture once for all! These words reveal in a flash the Kaiser's thought of "culture" and differentiate it absolutely from Christianity. He spoke as Mohammed might have spoken.

Again, the fruit out of the Hohenzollern root is seen in the Kaiser's conception of life; that is, the life of a German. He regards the army as the crown of glory of the German people. The highest honor of a Prussian is to appear in the king's coat, and his sublimest work is war. The punishment of God upon the Germans at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Kaiser tells us, was a punishment meted out to them because they had forgotten their proper business of being warriors. To be worthy of having God as their "Ally," the German, says the Kaiser, "must give himself body and soul" to the army and its duties. He who does

this is a good Christian and everyone who is a good Christian does this.

When speaking to the recruits in Berlin, November, 1897, the Kaiser said: "He who is not a good Christian is not a brave man and is no Prussian soldier," for the highest qualities of a Christian are "self-control and self-abnegation," the latter quality meaning for him "unconditional obedience and subordination" to those who are appointed over one. Again, in March, 1905, when addressing naval recruits in Wilhelmshafen, he declared that "a good Christian is synonymous with a good soldier." It is not the Kaiser's habit to speak of the good Christian as a good neighbor or a good citizen, a friend of the weak and a promoter of world-peace: he is interested in him primarily as a good *soldier*.

The Kaiser is a man of many interests but of one passion, and that is identical with the passion of Frederick the Great.

It may be noted that if "self-control and unconditional obedience to superiors" are the highest Christian qualities, it becomes difficult to separate between Christian ethics and the ethics of Sparta, for example, or Rome. But this limitation of Christian ethics is precisely that which might be expected from a passionate upholder of absolutism.

It is obvious that neither of the Kaiser's epigrams on the Christian and the soldier is true. A good Christian is *not* a good soldier in the Kaiser's sense of the words "good soldier." He does *not* give himself "heart and soul" to those placed over him, and he is *not* ready, at the command of his superiors, to shoot even his father and his

mother, as the Kaiser says a good soldier should do.

And, further, a good soldier, in the Kaiser's understanding of those words, is not for that reason a good Christian. The Spartans were surely good soldiers; so were Caesar's legions; so were the men who captured Port Arthur; so are many radical unbelievers in the Kaiser's army. When the Kaiser makes Christianity synonymous with being a good soldier, and a *Prussian* soldier at that, he betrays his passion for militarism and his ignorance of the gospel.

We pass to the Kaiser's view of the church. This also bears the Hohenzollern stamp. As he has made the great educational system of Germany more and more subservient to the end of producing soldiers, so he has used the church to promote political and military ambitions.

In the speech at Aachen, June 19, 1902, the Kaiser declared that the state needs the church to help it overthrow the power of socialism. That statement is frank and clear. The church is regarded as a tool for the accomplishment of political ends. The Kaiser reminded his hearers on this occasion that "the sole protection of the church in these times of trouble and unbelief is the emperor's hand and the shield of the empire." These words too are illuminative of the Kaiser's conception of the church. It needs his hand to support it and the shield of the empire to protect it! It is to be hoped that this is not really true of the present religious life of Germany, for then must it be indeed a degenerate vine. A faith that arose without any king's permission, that spread for three centuries in the

face of many attempts of kings to crush it, and which flourishes today in every republic on earth, does not, in Germany or elsewhere, depend on an emperor's favor.

The Kaiser as king of Prussia is the head of the Prussian church, but it is evident that this high office is regarded by him as altogether subordinate to his position as head of the army. His grandfather told him to remember always that the basis of Germany's greatness is the Prussian army, and in the Kaiser's first speech to the army he declared that they were "born for each other." From that day to the present he has lost no opportunity of glorifying the army. In his address of January, 1, 1900, he declared that it was "the rock on which Germany's might and greatness rest." In comparison with the army the church has a small place in the Kaiser's life, and that a place, not of worthy independence, but of manifest subordination to the army. The army, according to a recent German writer, is the one great organism of culture which comprises the entire people. The Kaiser might not admit that the army is the *sole* organism of national culture, but he speaks and acts as though it were by far the most important one. Army officers enjoy the highest social rank on the German earth and, if the Kaiser's vision is true, in the German heaven as well, for the immediate circle around the "great Ally" consists, not of Luther and others like him in the service of religion, not of the great musicians and poets—Händel and Mendelssohn, Goethe and Schiller—not of the great teachers and scientists, like Froebel and Humboldt, but it consists, as we have

already seen, of Frederick the Great and William I "with their generals, field marshals, and paladins." What Christian would not rather be in purgatory with Vergil and Plato than be in this Prussian paradise!

In the autumn of 1898 the Kaiser made a trip to Palestine, and spoke under the spell of the sacred associations clustering around such places as Bethlehem and Jerusalem, but even there the political and national note in his conception of the church was not wanting. Thus, after saying that the influence of Christians in Jerusalem had sunk to its lowest state, he proceeds as follows: "And now *our* turn has come. The German Empire and the German name have now acquired throughout the empire of the Osmanli a higher respect than ever before. It is for us at present to demonstrate what is really the essence of Christianity and to show that the exercise of Christian love is our plain duty even toward the Mohammedan population. The Kaiser seems not to have heard of the Hammins and Posts and Blisses who founded flourishing colleges in Mohammedan lands and preached the gospel of love by their lives years before he was born."

More noteworthy still is the following utterance in the Jerusalem address. "What the German people have become," says the Kaiser, "they have become under the banner of the cross of Golgotha, the symbol of self-sacrificing love of our neighbor." But we must read these words in the light of the Kaiser's habitual references to the source of German greatness, which locate it in the House of Hohenzollern. But surely the House of Hohenzollern, as

described in history, has never been deeply inspired by "the symbol of self-sacrificing love of our neighbor." The Hohenzollern "love" for its neighbors has been habitually and systematically expressed in "eating" them. It was thus that Frederick the Great "loved" Maria Theresa of Austria, thus that Bismarck "loved" Schleswig-Holstein, and thus that William I "loved" France. These and lesser men of their kind are the ones who have made Germany "powerful and respected," to use the Kaiser's phrase, and it is to them that he usually gives the glory. Does he then regard "the banner of the cross" and the double-headed black Prussian eagle as equivalent symbols? Does he think of the rattle of the Hohenzollern sword as the natural accompaniment of "self-sacrificing love"?

One who follows the Kaiser's thought from 1889 to 1914 cannot be in doubt as to which of these antagonistic symbols has been the master-motive of his life. If he has a sincere personal interest in Christianity, he subordinates it completely to his passionate interest in his army and navy. He does not, like the cynical Frederick, frankly use religion as a mere tool of Prussian statecraft, but nevertheless, as a simple matter of fact, he makes the church of which he is the head subservient to political ends.

We should take at least brief notice of the Kaiser's use of the Bible. As his view of God, of German life, and the German church is thoroughly militarized, suited to the aims of a military absolutism, so also are his view and use of the Bible. If the Kaiser did not assume to be a preacher and an interpreter of the Scriptures, competent to speak the

final word on how the Assyriologist must handle the Bible, and also to declare what the essence of Christianity is, we might pass lightly over his views or ignore them altogether; but now we are not at liberty so to do.

The Kaiser's knowledge of the Bible, unlike that of Lincoln or Tennyson, for example, is conventional and superficial—such an acquaintance as the obligatory Bible-study of his boyhood might have given him. One would search his religious utterances in vain for evidence that he ever came under the spell of the great Hebrew prophets, as one also looks in vain for evidence of his appreciation of the central message of Jesus and the significance of his life. He employs certain orthodox formulas relative to these subjects much as Constantine might have used them sixteen centuries ago.

That part of the Bible that appeals to the Kaiser is the part which is most foreign to the teaching of the Master: the military deeds and military spirit of certain sections of the Old Testament.

It is noteworthy that the only sermon by the Kaiser that has found its way into print is that on the battle between Israel and Amalek in the days of Moses, a sermon preached on board the "Hohenzollern," July, 1900. The modern "Amalek" was the Chinese, who, the Kaiser said, were hindering "the triumphant progress of Christian morals, Christian faith, European commerce and education." It was the command of God to go forth and fight this "Amalek."

The main part of the Kaiser's sermon was on the duty and the power of prayer, i.e., prayer for the German soldiers, that their arms might be "strong to

punish the assassins," and that "with the mailed fist" they might set right "the murderous disorder" and then come home with "the laurel wreath on their helmets and the medal of honor on their breasts."

It is instructive to listen to the Kaiser's words to the troops on their departure for China, for these make yet plainer what he meant by his words on prayer on board the "Hohenzollern." The prayers of the people at home were to help the troops to do what the Kaiser told them to do. And what was that? These are his words: "Quarter is not to be given. Prisoners are not to be taken. Use your weapons in such a way that for a thousand years no Chinese shall dare to look upon a German askance. Show your manliness. . . . Open a way for culture once for all."

Both sermon and address reveal a conception of prayer far more in keeping with the times of Amalek than with the spirit of the twentieth century. It is absolutely untouched by any faintest gleam of the Christian spirit. It is proud, hard, conscienceless, militaristic.

Having now completed our survey of the Kaiser's religion, let us state the conclusion of the whole matter. The Kaiser, judged by his own words spoken through a quarter of a century prior to this war, presents an unparalleled personal illustration of a thoroughly

militarized Christianity. The reader can judge for himself whether the events of the past three and a half years overthrow this conclusion, or, on the contrary, establish it forever.

We have good reason to regard Christianity as the highest and most beneficent religion known to men, but we also have good reason to regard a thoroughly militarized Christianity, like that of the Kaiser, as the lowest and most harmful religion ever developed on earth. It is the lowest because it systematically stifles the better instincts of the heart, and it is the most harmful because it blots out the great central truth of the universal fatherhood of God.

Militarism is barbarism, and a militarized Christianity is simply barbarism in disguise. The spirit of Christianity has fled; only the mocking name remains.

It is a relatively trifling matter that the German people should be subject to an emperor, but it is a matter of infinitely serious import, both for them and for the world, that they should continue to be subject to an emperor in whom and in whose government Christianity has become thoroughly militarized.

The curse of Hohenzollernism is nowhere so heavy and damning as in its ruthless perversion of the religion of democracy, the religion of brotherhood and freedom, and in its transformation of this great gospel into a tool of personal and national ambition.